

For Immediate Release

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January 12, 2011

201-222-2828

Sires calls for strong country ownership in U.S. foreign assistance at an event to commemorate the earthquake

Washington, D.C.—On January 11, 2011, one year after the devastating earthquake in Haiti, Congressman Sires was the keynote speaker at a policy discussion hosted by Oxfam America to assess the effectiveness of foreign assistance to Haiti. Serving on the discussion panel were development experts Ray Offenheiser, president of Oxfam America; Robert Maguire, chair of the United States Institute of Peace Haiti Working Group; Thomas C. Adams, State Department special coordinator to Haiti; Russell Porter, director of the USAID Haiti Task Team; and Dr. Florence Duperval Guillaume, deputy chief of party at Management Sciences for Health. Cokie Roberts, a senior news analyst for National Public Radio and board member for Save the Children, offered opening remarks on her recent trip to Haiti. The panel was moderated by Oxfam's senior policy advisor for humanitarian response, Angela Bruce Raeburn.

“As we commemorate last year’s tragic earthquake, it is important to highlight the many accomplishments and discuss the lessons learned during the humanitarian response,” said Congressman Sires. “This discussion provided a valuable opportunity to examine how the international community can move forward in the reconstruction process in partnership with both Haitian citizens and the Haitian government in order to create a strong future for Haiti.”

The panel discussed the reality of the situation in Haiti, examined lessons learned from the past year, and explored how to improve aid strategy as we move forward towards a stable and productive Haiti. In his opening remarks, Congressman Sires spoke of the importance of country ownership in effective and accountable foreign assistance strategies.

“The best rebuilding efforts in Haiti will be those that are truly realized by the Haitian people,” said Sires.

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